

THIS IS JAINISM

Or

Glimpses of the Essentials

Of

Jainism

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PREFACE

“The Jains have no belief in the eternal God, Supreme Ruler and the Creator of the world..... They deny the Fatherhood of God and the whole system of their caste is the negation of the Brotherhood of man.”

—*Mr. Margaret Stevenson.*

The above lines from a booklet on Jainism by Mrs. Margaret Stevenson have impelled me to write this small book on the essentials of Jainism which is rather a system of philosophical thought, profound and abstruse, than a dogmatic religion in the strict sense that other religions are. My object in writing this book is twofold: to pick to pieces the unwarranted criticism levelled against Jainism; and to tell her, in particular and others of her kidney, in general, what Jainism is and what it stands for in this world of waning belief, which is drifting towards chaos for a crash, being fed on a death-philosophy, denial of spiritual values.

The complete quotation from which the lines cited above have been taken opens the first chapter of this book, in which I have proved to the hilt that Jainism is based on scientific principles, and presents a philosophy of life rooted in the idea, not only of the brotherhood of man, but also of the brotherhood of life, which makes it universal in the sense that it lays down definite ideas or ideals of man's conduct in life, of his progress and perfection, and of his origin and final goal of blissful existence that awaits him.

In the presentation of the subject-matter, although one has perforce to take recourse to subtleties of logic, soar to the heights of philosophy, and scale the summits of one's own spiritual experience, I have tried to employ

simple straightforward and common-sense arguments which can be easily understood by a layman.

I hope that whatever I have written and the material I have been able to glean from various sources for this book—and I have touched merely the fringe of the vast and intricate subject—will suffice to dispel the gloom of ignorance and misunderstanding, and dissolve many a cobweb of doubts in the mind of Mrs. Stevenson. The following poem on True Freedom by Frank Mansell beautifully presents the true spirit of Jainism :

“No man can bind another; he is bound
By his own passion, his love and hate;
Why curse thy lot ? True liberty is found
When lust is lost—this law the wise men state.
Grasp thou the substance, let the shadows go,
For they are such as no man can possess;
Appearance mocks thee, slave to thy own lustfulness.
For each is bound according to his vent,
And as his own passion so his bond will be;
By our own lust are we in passion pent,
And lust overcome increases liberty.
Let all things that fail thee, hope in ruin fall;
Conquer thy lust and thou art free of all”.


Lastly, my thanks are due to Shrimati Rattan Devi Jain of Jaurinagar, Mainpuri, whose donation has made it possible for me to bring out this book.

Shri Mahabirji.
Rajasthan W. Rly.

C. N. Zutshi.

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DEDICATED

TO

Shrimati Rattan Devi Jain

OF

JAŪRINAGAR, MAINPURI

IN

Appriciation Of Her Services

TO

JAINISM

I

The Universality of Jainism.

Mrs. Margaret Stevenson in her booklet on Jainism says .—

“The Jains have no belief in one eternal God, Supreme Ruler and Creator of the world. They believe the world to be eternal and give strange inadequate reasons to prove that it could never have been created. They deny the fatherhood of God and the whole system of their caste rules is a negation of the brotherhood of man. Though freely using the titles which other religions reserve for the Supreme Being, they supply them to human beings who have gradually raised themselves to certain peculiarly exalted position ”

This statement clearly shows how a follower of Christian faith can completely misunderstand the Jain point of view, and how wrongly she has interpreted it. Let us see what are the fundamental principles of Jainism on which the philosophy of life and death is based. A correct understanding of the Jain point of view will dispel the darkness of ignorance from the mind of a devout Christian who might try to see everything through her or his narrow vision.

It is commonsense that every system of thought, or philosophy or religion that embodies some truths about man's life upon earth, his origin and final destiny cannot be called secretarian; it needs must be universal. The universality of Jainism, therefore, lies in the fact that its principles are not applicable to the followers of Jainism only but also to all human beings.

In my opinion, it is wrong to call Jainism a religion in the sense that other religions are. If we study closely and examine critically the basic principles of Jainism, we can safely affirm that Jainism is more a philosophical thought than a dogmatic religion. There is a fine distinction between Jainism and Western philosophy. The latter is barren and leads one nowhere beyond speculative thought and guesses at truth, whereas Jainism has laid down definite ideas and ideals of human progress and perfection, man's origin and the final goal of blissful existence that awaits him. The method of approach to truth in Jainism is fairly scientific in the sense that it treats the problems of life and soul with the well-known system of classification, analysis and right and accurate understanding.

The system of thought known as Jainism has to be studied in a calm philosophic atmosphere. We find that the problem of human existence is looked at with the eye of the philosopher, and the question of human conduct tackled with definite directness which tells us how a man should live, what is his relation with the lower creatures round him, how he should guide his life, his actions that he may not injure even in thought any living creature. One might almost sum up the outlook of Jainism in one phrase that we find in the Sutra-Kritanga III. 20, that man by injuring no living creature reaches Nirvana, which is peace. That is the phrase which seems to carry with it the whole thought of Jain Peace—peace between man and man, peace between man and animal, peace everywhere and in all things. Such is the ideal of a Jain : that is the thought he endeavours to realize upon earth. Such identification is verily the mystic's gift. Robert Browning says in *Pauline* :—

“ I can live all the life of plants.....

 I can mount with the bird
 Leaping airily the pyramid of leaves.....

Or like a fish breathe in the morning air
 In the misty sun-warm water; or with flowers
 And trees can smile in light at the sinking sun."

The twenty-four teachers that this system of thought has produced, popularly called **Tirthankaras**, were, men of right vision and perfect spiritual insight and were fully familiar with the essence of things real and unreal: they had attained perfection through their own self-effort, purification of thought and action, and complete freedom from any taint of desire. They were therefore, competent to lay down certain fundamental principles of life and death, which they had intuited through their own spiritual experience.

The Jain philosophy holds that man is yet imperfect* but capable of improvement; he can advance in the direction of perfection. Man, is

*Life on earth may be a glorious pilgrimage, not a mere period of endurance if it is recognised that its use may be to make the next life more intense. Browning says in *Bishop Bloughram's Apology* :—

"Why lose this life in the meantime, since its use may be to make the next life more intense?" And in *Cleon*, he says, "Why stay we on earth unless to grow?" Progress is the law of life. The following lines in Browning's *Sordello* vividly and in such modern manner, voice the Jain philosophy which holds that man is capable of improvement: he can advance in the direction of perfection :—

"We die; which means to say, the whole's removed,
 Dismounted wheel by wheel, this complex-gin,
 To be set anew elsewhere, begin
 A task indeed, but with a clearer clime
 Than the murky lodgment of our building-time."

on a journey from the animal to the divine. The human soul can attain the highest pinnacle of spiritual glory through various stages of purification. In its consummation, in its perfect condition the soul enjoys its true and eternal character, whereof the characteristics are the four infinities—infinite perception of faith, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss.

Man must control his material nature by his spiritual nature. The soul attains perfection only after the entire subjugation of matter. It then attains freedom and happiness. It is such a free and happy soul that is called Jain, the conqueror, or Tirthankara the guide

These perfect souls reach the height of Godhead with all its known connotation. It is clear that this conception of Godhead is more rational and scientific than the ideal of extra-cosmic God sitting on High and guiding human affairs. According to the Jaina system of thought, a man's progress is endless and he attains his Godhead through a long process of evolution and persistent self-effort. That is the glory, that is the destiny of man guaranteed by Jainism. This ideal is not exclusively meant for those who are in a Jain family or believe in its

creed, but is meant for all mankind and is distinctly universal in its application.

Then Jainism enjoins impersonal worship. The worship or reverence according to Jainism is given to all human souls worthy of it, in whatever country or clime they may happen to be or hail from; even though they come from the ends of the earth.

Jainism lays down that man alone is responsible for all that is good or bad in his life. This is the universal principle of Jainism in the true sense of the word, because it is meant for all human beings. Jainism more than any other creed gives absolute religious freedom to man. Nothing can intervene between the actions man does and the fruits thereof. This gives free scope to, and imposes no restraint or restrictions on, his free will. And this also allows him to choose between what is good and what is wrong, so that he may be better able to shape* his actions.

*William Earnest Henley writes in his poem *Inlycatas*.—

"It matters not how narrow the gate.

How charged with punishment, the scroll

I am the master of my fate;

I am the captain of my soul."

Longfellow says:—

"All are architects of Fate.

Working in these walls of time.

Some with massive deeds and great,

Some with ornaments of rhyme."

As compared with most of the other religions, it is important to notice that Jainism has a very definite and uncompromising attitude towards the conception of gods. It is on this very ground that it is accused of being atheistic. But this is not so, because Jainism believes in Godhead and innumerable God, but certainly Jainism is atheistic in not believing its God to have created the universe. It must be noted that creation implies volition, a desire to create. Then, a desire can only relate to something or fact which does not exist, but ought to be; therefore it implies imperfection. And God cannot be imperfect. This is the most commonsense argument against the theory of God as the Creator of the universe. If truth be told, believers in the Creation Theory make God a man, which brings him down to the needs and imperfection; whereas Jainism raises man to Godhead and inspires him to raise himself as near to Godhead as possible by steady faith, right perception, perfect knowledge, and above all, by a spotless life.

There are two categories : Soul, Jiva; and non-soul, Ajiva. The whole universe falls under this division, which is logically perfect. It is the division by dichotomy. Jiva is what lives,

whether a worm, or an ant, or a rose, or a nightingale, or a horse, or a man. It is capable of seeing and knowing all; it desires happiness and avoids pain.

Jainism exposes the hallowness of death, Jainism marks the mockery of death's vanity and makes a brave assertion of the glory of life. It reminds me of what Robert Browning at his death-bed said :

"Death ! Death ! It is this harping on death I despise so much—'his idle and of en cowardly as' well as ignorant harping !Without death, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. It is foolish to argue upon such a thing even. For myself, I deny death as an end of everything. Never say of me that I am dead. It is merely a crapelike churchyardy word for change, for growth "

Like many other great spirits, he was given the death that he had merited, and he met it like a friend. In **Prospice** he says:—

"I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore,

And made me creep past;

No ! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,

The heroes of old

Bear the brunt.....!'

One who believes in eternity and therefore in the immortality of the soul, does not dread death which means only the disappearance of the physical form. Every soul is potentially pure. Matter is an unclean evil. It is something like "A spark that disturbs our clod, nearer we hold of God", as Browning puts it. The soul is ever perfect, all-powerful. It wanders in the **Samsara**. It can return to its perfect condition. It goes upward and upward endlessly. The soul is a **Dravya** and therefore like every other **Dravya**, it is eternal.

It cannot be gainsaid that in every living being, in every man, a desire for happiness and an aversion to pain is the first universal feature of life. He longs and seeks happiness exempt from decay. Peace and bliss are the twin goals aimed at by the soul.

The aim of the Jain ethics is to organise the combined activity of a society (intent upon perfection) so that the individuals may have the greatest possible number of facilities for attaining **Moksha** or **Nirvana**, i. e., perfect peace and bliss of the soul, or what is generally called **Sat-Chit-Ananda**.

A true Jain will do nothing to hurt the feelings of another person, man, woman and child

nor will he violate the principles of right ethical conduct and righteousness. Jaina ethics is meant for man and woman of all positions, for kings, warriors, traders, artisans, agriculturalists, housewives, and so on. The wise will choose the Jain rules of conduct for every action of their calling in life. "Do your duty, and do it as humanly as possible". This is in a nutshell the primary and basic precept of Jainism. Who can say that it is really not meant for all human beings ? Is it not then a universal doctrine ?

II

The Antiquity of Jainism.

Upto the close of the last century, even impartial scholars held very vague opinions about Jainism, which were unfortunately based on hearsay. The superficial resemblance of Jainism with Buddhism and Hinduism also did not actuate them to study Jaina literature. There was also another difficulty; the literature on Jainism, being mainly in Prakrit and Sanskrit, was not easily accessible to those scholars who did not know these old oriental languages.

It is indeed a pity that while other systems of Indian philosophy have so many exponents, both in India and abroad, the rich, deep and vast treasures of the Jaina thought relating to all fields of culture, should be so little known to the world at large. This deficiency is, however, now being made up by several organizations of the Jaina community.

In showing the antiquity of Jainism, we have to refer to those scholars who have made

researches in the subject. Dr. S. C. Vidya Bhushan says:—

“Jainism is one of the most ancient and noble religions..... If India stands unique in the world of her spiritual and philosophical development, no one will deny that credit goes to the Jainas no less than to the Brahmins and the Buddhists”.

Prof. Ram Prasad Chandra, a famous scholar of archeology says:—

“The ancient Jaina sculptors of Mathura, dating from the 1st century A. D., guarantee the antiquity and authenticity of many of the Jaina traditions”.

Dr. R. Fuhrer says.—

“Lord Nemi Nath, the 22nd Tirthankara of the Jainas (a contemporary of Lord Krishna) has been accepted as a historical person”.

Dr. Prem Nath Vidyalkar, in a note on the Babylonian King Nabuchadnazzar (1140 B. C.) which he had discovered in Kathiawar, says :—

“In deciphering this inscription one may say that it may go a long way in proving the antiquity of Jaina religion, since the name of Nemi Nath appears in the inscription.”

These evidences go to prove that the worship of Lord Nemi Nath or Arist Nemi, was established in the post Mahabharata days long before the advent of Lord Paras Nath and Lord Mahavira.

Even the reputed Vedic scholars like Prof V. P. Vadyar and Sri Radha Krishna accepted the existence of Jainism parallel to Vedic religion in India. Sri Radha Krishna writes : "The Yajurvede mentions the names of three Tirthankaras, Rishabha, Ajit Nath and Arist Nemi". Prof J. C. Vidyalkar says :—

"We are tempted to think that our country was named Bharatavarsha after the name of Bharata son of Rishabha Nath, and not son of Shakuntla and Dushyanta who are either legendary figures or some prehistoric persons".

The epoch-making discovery of the prehistoric Indus Valley civilization of Mohanjodaro and Harappa further brings to light the antiquity of Jainism. Sir John Marshall, Prof. Ram Prasad Chandra, Prof. Pran Nath, Prof. S. Sri Kanta Sashtri have all held this Indus Valley civilization as Non-Vedic and Pre-Vedic.

Massy made figures with signs of Bull on several images found in these excuvations

indicate the sign of Jain Rishabha, and Rishaba means bull. Major General J. G. R. Farlong. F. R. S. E., F. R. A. S., after his 17 years study of, and research in, the subject, writes ;

“All upper-western and south-central India was then, indeed, from unknown times, ruled by Dravidas, and given to free serpent and phallic worship, but then there also existed throughout upper India an ancient and highly religious, philosophical, ethical and severely ascetical religion, viz, Jainism out of which clearly developed the early escetical features of Brahminism and Buddhism”.

Prof Jacobi Harmann, an erudite and eminent German scholar, says; —

“In conclusion, let me assert my conviction that Jainism is an original system, quite distinct from, and independent of, all others, and therefore, it is of great importance for the study of philosophical thought and religious life in ancient India”.

In discussing the place of Jainism in the system of Indian philosophy, the late Mr. M.M. Ganga Nath Jha, once Vice-chancellor of the Allahabad University, opined.

‘The Jaina philosophy, no doubt, holds certain principles in common with Buddhism, Vedanta, Sankhya, Nyaya and Vaiseshika systems, but this does not disprove its independent origin and free development. It has some similarities with other Indian systems but it has its own peculiarities and marked differences as well.’

Inspired by the studies in Jaina cultural and philosophical literature, the late Sir Sanmukham Chetty once said:—

“It has occurred to me as a very interesting historical speculation as to what must have been the real genesis of this great religion (Jainism) in India. Looking to this great religion from that point of view, I am tempted to believe that Jainism was probably the earliest religion prevalent in India, and it was the flourishing religion when the Aryan migration came to India and when the religion of the Vedas was being evolved in the Panjab. I think it was the tremendous force let loose by Lord Mahavira that really created Lord Buddha...”

He further says :—

“It is beyond my capacity to say anything about the greatness of the Jaina religion. I have read suffi-

ently to warrant my saying that the contribution which the Jainas have made to the Indian culture is something unique. I personally believe that if Jainism had kept its hold firmly in India, we would have had a more united India and certainly a greater India than today".

Mahatma Gandhi and Lokyamanya Tilak had also expressed same views on many occasions about Jainism. acknowledging the antiquity, benevolence of its high ethics and profundity of its logic and spiritual philosophy.

III

The Gospel of Jainism.

The first thing to know about Jainism is that it is a science, and not a code of arbitrary rules and commandments rooted in caprice and dictated by the passing fancy of the moment. It lays no claim to derive its authority from any non-human source, but is founded on the knowledge of those great seers who have attained perfection by their own spiritual experience. It is in this respect like any other science which claims its validity neither by dogmatism nor by mysticism. It is unnecessary to add that nothing but science or scientific thought can be relied upon to produce immediate, certain and unchanging results.

We can understand Jainism only when we have a clear conception of what religion is in the true sense of the word. Jainism is not like the religion which is vaguely talked about and preached to the people from the pulpits of the

numerous creeds which are popular in this age.

Briefly put, religion is the path of liberation of the soul of man from the suffering or pain which is the lot of men in this world, rather the lot of all beings in this universe.

All living beings, men, animals and the like, seek, happiness in all things and pursuits. Is there any one who hankers after anything but eternal life and blissfulness in some form or another? Religion claims to be the science which enables the soul to realize the immortality and bliss, for which it is hankering. Most of the religions of the world, however, have only dogma and myth to offer in place of the scientific thought which alone can satisfy the demands of reason and from which alone can flow the desired good, under all circumstances. Jainism is a perfectly accurate, definite and exact science, free from mystical ritual, unholy superstition and fear-engendering devotion. It does not enjoin upon its votaries to accept its teaching on the authority of anything other than reason, and invites all to understand the nature of the subject before pinning their on faith it.

Jainism explains the nature of happiness

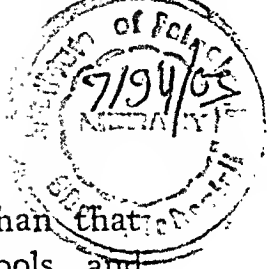
which everyone so ardently desires. The conception of happiness which Jainism puts before its followers is very different from the common ideal : it is undying, unabating, soul-enrapturing happiness which the gods enjoy. It has nothing of the temporary qualifications of lust that seeks the sexual pleasures depending on the contact with other things and bodies. The happiness which Jainism explains is exhilarating rhythm of ecstasy, delight or bliss

This ecstatic delight, which is neither evanescent nor the source of sorrow and pain following in the wake of sexual lust; is really the nature of the soul, though through ignorance it is unaware of the fact. The most commonsense proof of this is that the pleasure which one experiences on the successful performance of some task comes from within and is independent of the senses. Analysis reveals the fact that the essence of this kind of happiness lies in the very notion of true freedom, so that whenever the soul is freed from some irksome duty obligation or restraint—and all kinds of activities except the unrestrained "pulsation" of freedom are only the different forms of bondage—its natural delight at once manifests itself. The

soul is the rhythm of free activity of the self-conscious force, the living essence or "will-to-be", and feels dull and heavy when burdened with external and unnatural tasks and obligation. Hence the removal of its obligations and restraints re-establishes its pure rhythm of intense lightness, that is, freedom, and enables it to enjoy its Swabhavic Ananda (bliss). It follows from this that when all its obligations and tasks are removed, the soul must necessarily experience the purest kind of delight which being swabhavic (appertaining to its own nature, can have no ending.

Ignorance prevents the soul from the enjoyment of its natural joy which is very difficult to understand. The nature of the pure joy is such that one cannot extract it from one's surroundings, which are by nature utterly incapable of yielding it. Yet if men will only analyse their feelings, they will not fail to observe that the moments of true happiness are only the moments of true freedom. Ignorance of the natural joy of the soul, then, is the cause which stands between it and happiness. Hence knowledge is necessarily the road to bliss.

The kind of knowledge which leads to joy



is more comprehensive and perfect than that which is imparted in modern schools and colleges. It is the knowledge of the nature of substances and forces of nature which re-establish it therein.

All other kinds of knowledge may be necessary for the men of the world, but they are useless to the soul seeking perfection, i. e., immortality and bliss.

There are seven essential objects of knowledge, called Tattvas. These are : (1) The living or conscious substance i. e., the soul; (2) the non-living i. e., the unconscious substance; (3) Ashrava, i.e., inflow of the matter into the soul; (4) Bandha, i. e., bondage; (5) Samvara, or the checking of the inflow of the matter; (6) Nirjara, the removal of matter from the soul; and (7) Moksha-Nirvana i. e., freedom. We shall take each of these seven Tattvas separately, and shall deal with them briefly.

(1) The soul is the living substance, and is pure consciousness in essence; it is not the product of matter in any sense. It is by nature all-knowing and blissful, and is endowed with untiring, inexhaustible energy. All substances

are eternal, and the soul is no exception to the rule. It is Amuritik, that is, not possessed of sensible qualities; hence it cannot be perceived by the senses though it is not actually formless, since all things that exist must have some sort of form. Souls have existed, contaminated with matter; beginninglessness and are consequently unable to enjoy their swabhavik attributes, omni-science, bliss and the like. The practising of the rules of right conduct, however, enables one to remove the impurities which obstruct the thrice-blessed qualities of the soul, the four principal ones of which are collectively called Ananta Chatushtaya namely infinite perception, infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite bower.

(2) The non-living substances comprise pudgala that is matter, time, space; Dharm and Adharma. Jainism maintains that no world-process, or evolution; is possible in the absence of any one or more of these five non-soul substances and spirits (souls). Space is necessary for localization, time for continuity and succession, Dharma and Adharma for motion and rest respectively, matter for supplying the material of bodies, and souls for

life, knowledge and enjoyment. These six substance and their nature have been fully dealt with by Jaina philosophers, and therefore, it is not necessary to explain them at length here.

(3) The third Tattva is Ashrava, which signifies the influx of karmic matter into the soul. In consequence of its activities, the soul attracts to itself particles of matter which under the influence of its passions combine with it thereby crippling the natural functions and constituting its bandage. Janism maintains that the soul is eternal and has been under going transmigration during the entire beginningless Eternity of the past on account of the Karmic forces with which it is enmeshed. The Karmic Bandhans are forged by the fusion of spirit and matter, and rob the soul of its natural perfection and freedom. A fettered soul thus resembles a bird the wings of which have been sewn up to prevent its flying away. The soul is free by nature like the bird, but owing to the association of matter, feels as if its wings were cut and cannot enjoy its natural freedom and joy. The same idea is somewhat expressed in some of Robert Browning's poems. For

instance, take his poem **Rabbi Ben Ezra**:—

“.....As the bird wings and sings,

Let us cry'all good things

Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now than
flesh helps soul” or in

Paracelsus, he says :

“A baffling and perverting carnal mesh

Binds it, and makes all error; and to know

Rather consits in opening out a way

Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,

Than in effecting entry for a light

Supposed to be without.....

Therefore set free the soul alike in

Discovering the true laws by which the flesh

Accloys the spirit”.

(4) Bandha is the state of bondage of the soul as already explained. There are many kinds of bonds which have to be broken before Nirvana can be attained.

(5) Samvara is the process of checking the influx of Karmic matter into the constitution of the soul. Obviously, freedom cannot be had so long as the bondage of the soul is not terminated by the removal of the particles of matter of which its Karmic bonds are forged. The first

step towards this end is the checking of the further influx of matter which ceaselessly flows into the constitution of the soul.

(6) The inflow of fresh matter being checked, the next step is to remove the bonds one by one. This is called Nirara. When all the bonds are broken as under, and the soul is freed from all its crippling relations with matter, it enjoys its natural freedom and bliss and omniscience.

(7) The seventh and the last Tattva is naturally the ideal of perfection. That is, freedom, immortality and bliss, which the soul attains to on freeing itself from all its bonds.

Such is the nature of the essential principles of Tattvas. To recapitulate briefly, Jainism maintains that all living beings in the universe are conscious entities, possessed of fullness and perfection, and capable of manifesting them by self-exertion in the right direction. Their natural perfection, which includes immortality, omniscience, infinite energy and infinite bliss, is marred by the operation of their own Karma, that is of the different kinds of forces engendered in the soul in conjunction with matter by its own actions. Hence all that the soul has

to do is to check the further influx of Karmie matter and to destroy its bonds. The moment this can be done its natural perfection will be attained, and freedom, immortality and bliss enjoyed. There is no question of begging or bargaining with any one in this system, and it is noteworthy that it is absolutely impossible for any outside agency to confer either immortality, bliss or perfection which the soul is hankering after, and ceaselessly tries to obtain from its surroundings : the whole thing is a question of the law of cause and effect.

Jainism does not for the fore-going reason offer devotion to any beings in the hope of obtaining bliss, immortality or perfection from them. These are already the natural properties of the soul, and cannot possibly be had from outside. Hence, Jainism does not recognise the God of popular theology, but urges the spiritual soul to worship the feet of the perfected Siddhas, in the same way as one would show reverence to a teacher. The Greatest teacher is certainly entitled to the greatest amount of reverence, and no teacher can certainly be greater than the omniscient Tirthankaras who not only know all things, but the perfection of whose knowledge

is also fully demonstrated by the fact that it enabled them to attain the fullest degree of perfection.

Such is the main teaching of Jainism. It is obvious that it has nothing in common with any of those systems of religion which engender or encourage superstition. The path to Nirvana or Absolution; according to Jainism, consists in right belief, right knowledge and right conduct.

Jainism prescribes two kinds of rules of conduct for the souls which aspire to attain salvation—those becoming ascetics and those suitable for the life of the householder. The former's rigidity is well calculated to lead to emancipation in the course of our earth-life but the latter are meant for those not sufficiently advanced to undertake the arduous and austere vows of the ascetic. Hence the effect of the influence of Jainism on modern civilization does not mean the destruction of its useful institutions at all, but only the elimination of such of them as actually play havoc with the spiritual aspiration of the soul and lead it to undesirable regions and unhappy incarnations in the future.

The value of religion as the only means of salvation cannot be exaggerated. Myths only make us superstitious, and mysticism is apt to produce intellectual fog and mist. It is clear thinking alone which can lead us into the region of Light and Life for which every soul is athirst. History shows how truth entombed in the sepulchre of myth and legend is soon lost to view and replaced by unholy superstition and purblind bigotry, so often mistaken for faith. The purpose these myths serve is great, but when all is said and done, they are useful to him alone who can understand their significance. The soul is hankering after the realisation of the great ideal of perfection, that is Godhead, but the theologians of today have nothing better than mystic and misty dogmas to console it with.

The realisation of Godhead requires the conception of Truth, i e., the ideal to be attained, and the knowledge of the means to *attain it with, in the clearest possible way.* Mythology alone can hardly serve that purpose. It follows from this that religion can only benefit where it is conducive to precise and clear thinking. The attempt to educate the

masses by means of myths and legends has been given a sufficient trial all these past 2,000 years or so. But do we not see that it has only gone to make men irreligious and cruel at heart ? It is high time now that truth should be imparted to them in its pure, undisguised form. The fault with us is that we are always ready to set up ourselves as prophets and teachers without ever having been students ourselves. When we approach religion as humble seekers after Truth, and not in the spirit of bigotry or conceit, it will be seen that Jainism stands unrivalled among the systems which claim to impart the Truth.

Live and let live must be the motto of a truly civilized man.

IV

The Ideals of Jainism.

In the Jain Shastras it is stated that there is only one and indivisible force or spirit which pervades not only the human kingdom but also the animal kingdom, and which can be grasped or realized by effort and perseverance. An instance is given of a deer which by reason of its inner vision could bring about the union between a mendicant and a liberal-hearted wood-cutter. Likewise, an elevated soul in the body of a frog voluntarily got itself crushed while running to have *darshan* of Shri Mahavir ji and attained liberation. When even a deer or a frog can attain self-realization, there cannot be any limitation to the effort of a human being. From this point of view, the Jain philosophy can be favourably compared with the universal philosophy. It asserts in no dubious terms that all created beings can attain the state of perfection. It states that though the earthen vessels have varying shapes and names, they in reality are the same earth.

The Shastras have laid down two things in order that these principles can be applied to one's actions in practical life. These are : (1) Recognition of merit (Gun puja); (2) Seeing good (Mangala) in everything. As an illustration of Gun Puja the Jain philosophy has enjoined reverence with **Bhava** to all the saints of the world. The Great Hemchandracharya when he visited the Shiva Mandir at Patna exclaimed :

"I bow to him who is the source of the universe and before whom world-liness vanishes; may He be Vishnu or Brahma or Shiva or Jina."

Among the three great men mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi as his Gurus, the first was an Adarsha (ideal) Jaina. From him Gandhiji learnt the cosmopolitan nature of Hindu religion and realized the truth of Lokamanya Tilak's remark that the non-violence of Jainism had considerably influenced the Vedic religion. Gandhiji showed the way to world peace by successfully putting into practice the principle of non-violence on a mass scale.

There is a story of two brothers, Bharata and Bahubali who went to fight on the

battlefield, where they met an emancipated soul and finally decided to fight with each other only mentally (!) on behalf of the assembled armies, and thereby avolved a bloody battle.

In the Jaina Shastras both those who practise high penance and those who do minor penance are put on the same level. There is no distinction of colour sex, age or caste. In the Jain philosophy hoarding, or non-possessiveness (Aparigraha) is considered more important than the suppression of egoism. Mahatma Gandhi also recommended Aparigraha as one of the cardinal virtues. The Jain philosophy lays down that one should either be a trustee of hoarded wealth or should discard it. It says that where egoism prevails, greed increases and exploitation is generated. That is why in the Shastras, limitations have been prescribed to trade and enjoyment of the material objects. *Daya* and *Dana* (kindness and charity) have been considered to be the basis of all religions, and justice and equal distribution of material wealth have been considered to be the principal virtues.

The name of Sage Anandaghanaji, the

trustee Bhamasha and the philanthropist Jagdusha are famous in the history of Jainism. The concept of a secular state, which is the basis of our constitution, had already been anticipated in the Jaina Shastras, as also the modern "Bhudan Yagna", which aims at equal distribution of wealth and land. In life, one more thing which need be remembered is that democracy can only thrive by putting the village as the unit of the state. Thus can an organization be built up, which will secure the unity of India as a whole, while developing, side by side, the justifiable freedom of an individual. It was therefore that Gandhiji gave priority in the constructive programme to the village uplift and the cultivation of the mother tongue. Pali and Ardha-Magadhi got importance in the age of Mahavira and Buddha for similar reasons.

With these ideals before us, if we proceed on our path, discarding the stifling bonds of caste, colour, creed and sex, crossing the pool of egotism, recognising merit wherever found, seeing good in everything, making a serious effort to secure world peace, and using our intellect, wealth and influence for the benefit

of others, we shall be able to secure through united effort of all sincere workers, peace in the world and joy for every human being free from communalism, violent revolution and vested interests.

V

The Ethics and Philosophy of Jainism

The world is in a state of ferment today. Fear and hate grip the nations of the world. This has brought about a cold war in the world in spite of experiencing the horrors of the two world wars. The net result of all this is that there is considerable insecurity in the world which is now like a hayrick waiting for its match.

Signs of threatening environment, of insecurity struggle and impending war all over the world are all due to the strong control of human relations by instincts of greed and selfishness. There is no doubt that religion alone has the power to curb the evils that have gained an upper hand over the human passions. Undoubtedly, victory over the abnormal tendencies can be possible only when true religious belief is awakened in the heart of every man. It is the flame of religion that can consume all animosities in its purity. As majority of the

people are governed by the ideas of thinkers, scholars and saints of their respective religions and classes, it is the duty of these few talented and privileged persons of every community, first of all, to come to a proper understanding. Don't ideas move the world? With an open mind and with freedom from prejudice and misconceptions, we should try to make a sincere effort to understand each religion and realize the essential unity of all the religions of the world. As the first step in the direction, we must realize the essential unity of man and basic unity of all religions, and the fact that man in his social life cannot achieve peace and concord unless he has made "live and let live" his motto of life.

It is time that men should now try to possess mental equipoise and put a stop to destructive discussions which lead us nowhere. A tendency to think rightly and deeply, and an understanding making for unity out of seeming disunity should be cultivated. The benevolent tendency of the religious thinkers and their appeal to the masses to act and behave with proper discrimination, consideration and essential spirit of compromise and

adjustment in society will not only save humanity from the besetting distress and insecurity, but will also create a healthy atmosphere of peace and confidence in the world. Then alone will mankind find solace and time to take interest in the spiritual and cultural activities of the world.

There are only two aspects of all religions, the outer and the inner. The outer aspect is the form of the different kinds of worships and rituals; while the inner aspect is the rules of ethical and moral conduct, which are more or less common in all religions. Unfortunately, primary importance is given to the outer aspect or to the differing outer forms of religious worships and rituals, and to act according to the common inner spirit of religion is usually forgotten. This tendency has naturally divided the entire humanity into different religious sects, and erected strong bulwarks against all such sects creating an atmosphere of harmony and peace in the world. Mankind has thus lost sight of the true and essential inner aspect of all religions.

Let us illustrate these observations from the

life of Mahatma Gandhi. He was born in a community of the Vedic religion and was closely connected with Jainism, being brought up in the environment of Jaina culture besides various other ties of relationship. But he perhaps never performed Yajnas or sacrifices after the sanction of the Vedas. He was never heard to have worshipped in any Vaishnava or Jaina temple. Yet leaving aside the bigots of every religion to whom the outer form alone is primary, people of many religions have claimed this great man as the follower of their respective religions, because he followed in his everyday life the fundamental code, i. e., the inner aspect which is common in all religions. He was said to be a staunch follower of the Gita, though by a close study of his actions, we find that he discarded the 'Dushta Daman' siddhanta of the Gita. He respected the Vedas of the Hindus, the Gamias of the Jains the Pitakes, of the Buddhists, the Kuran of the Muslims and the Bible of the Christians for their common, ethical and moral teachings.

It is common knowledge that he observed his prayers in the open field, in the company of the people of all castes and creeds. The

Rama of his famous Kirtan was not Rama, son of Dashratha, but the Rama who is the essence of all souls, and is named Rama Rahim, Ishaar, Allah, etc., according to one's own religious faith. Thus from the point of view of bigots, the great man was an irreligious person. If we cast a glance over his actions whether in private life or in public life, solving the problems of Harijans, or working for rural uplift, or in any other social field, we shall find that all his actions were thoroughly saturated with the true and inner spirit of all the religions of the world. It was so because he belonged to the invisible church of the Spirit, the silent worship of which only lovers of humanity can understand, and of which it has been rightly said :—

“Her priests all God’s faithful sons,
To serve the world raised up;
The pure in heart her baptised ones,
Love her communion cup.”

No doubt, every religion worth the name has its own philosophy of life. Without this knowledge, no religion can be said to be an independent religion. But this serious subject in every religion happens to be the concern of

only a few persons in all communities. Then the ultimate truth cannot be realized by merely a philosophic discussion; it is only a means to the end.

What are after all the tenets of Jaina ethics and philosophy? In a few words, Jainism is not a one-sided view of life. It upholds all views of life in a synthetic whole realized up to this time within it. Out of their different experiences and realizations about life, the Jain seers did not claim their thinking and experience as something novel but like the game of word-building, they uphold their views at the proper place alongside of other views of life realized by other fellow-seers of their times. This creative tendency has not allowed any branch of knowledge or thought to go astray, being incomplete in itself without serving a fruitful purpose. Instead, all different thoughts from different angles of vision thus derived and gathered together formed a big brotherhood of life in Jainism. Before explaining this view of life, one might like to hear the opinions of some of the eminent scholars, thinkers and great men, which

they formed after a deep study of the literature on Jainology or from contact with the Jaina scholars and learned saints.

Up to the close of the last century, even impartial scholars held very poor opinions about Jainism, which were unfortunately based on hearsay. The superficial outward resemblance of Jainism and Buddhism also did not actuate them to study the Jain literature. Further the literature on Jainism being also mainly in Prakrit and Sanskrit was not easily accessible to those scholars who did not know these old oriental languages. In his foreword to **The Jaina philosophy of Non-absolutism**, the eminent scholar Dr. Satkori Mukerji of the Calcutta university, writes :

“It is a pity that while other systems of Indian philosophy have so many exponents. both here and abroad. the rich, deep and vast treasures of the Jaina thought relating to all the fields of culture, particularly relating to metaphysics, epistemology and logic should be so little known to the world at large. This ignoble fact is not at all conducive to the credit of the rich adherents of the Jaina faith in this land”.

This deficiency is, however, now being

made up by several organizations of the Jain community.

According to Jainism, this universe is not illusory.* It is not a creation of imagination but a fact and reality. It is a display of the soul and non-soul (inanimate) elements. Jiva or soul is the animate substance having consciousness as its distinguishing feature from the non-soul or non-living substance. The soul is characterised by consciousness. This quality of consciousness of the soul is inherent in a latent stage and is inseparable. It is not the product of the stimulus in any sense. The stimulus is related to a mundane soul, and it merely awakens the consciousness which exists in dormant state within the soul owing to the adverse action of the Karmas on it. The stimulus does not thus create the state of consciousness but produces a stir or excitement only. There is nothing surprising in it.

Matter, too, possesses many wonderful

*Tell me not in mournful numbers,
 'Life is but an empty dream.'
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,
 And things are not what they seem."
 "Life is real ! life is earnest !
 And the grave is not its'goal."

—Longfellow

qualites and properties of its own. Modern science has recognised the indestructible quality and other inherent properties of matter. The soul though entirely different from matter and is separable from its conjugation, is formed as bound with the Karmic matter, like milk and water, and so long as it is in conjugation with the Karmic matter, it has a close relationship with it.

Though the qualities or the properties of matter cannot obliterate the inherent, natural and inseparable qualities of the soul, i. e., knowledge, perception, etc., they can blur the natural vision of the soul for the time being, e. g., an intoxicated man. Wine has its own properties of stupifying the mind. When it is kept in the bottle, it does not act because the bottle does not possess the quality of consciousness or intelligence. But it acts as soon as it reaches the stomach of a man. So, too, with soul and matter. Matter does not destroy the inherent quality of the soul. *The soul needs

* "...nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul."

—Robert Browning in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

* "Fool ! all that is at all,

Lasts ever, fast recall;

Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure."

— Robert Browning in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*,

the help of the sense organs, e. g., eyes, ears, etc., only so long as it is bound by the karma. A pure soul realizes the whole vision of a thing by mere intuition and perception. The way of liberating the soul from the bondage of karma is called **Sadhana** or means of liberation in Jainism which will be described later on.

What we understand by the material world is the product of the various kinds of non-soul substances. All these elements are real eternal and infinite in number. The individual elements are not visible in their natural form. It is only the synthetic or the compound state of all the elements that is known as the material world, visible to us. Every element has its own inherent qualities or properties and these are always acting and reacting on one another. On the principle of cause and effect rests the material world which is always subject to change at every moment. But change is possible only in the form of things. Subtle changes are always taking place. Sometimes catastrophic changes also take place according to this natural law of cause and effect. In the Jain terminology, **Utpada** is formation, **Dhravya** is existence or continuance of light change, and **Vyaya** is

termed as catastrophie change. All these three factors are in fact one and the same thing, i.e., change, but are termed as above from different angles of vision. There is neither creation nor destruction by any omnipotent power, but there is formation or change as above. The above three factors, viz, formation, existence, and change are never at rest, they are in perpetual motion. The universe is in a constant state of flux

Besides pudgal or matter there is another element as Dharma. This helps the soul and Pudgal or the unconscious matter, in the state of movement. It, however, does not move in itself. It is helpful in the movement of other objects like the railway lines which are helpful in the movement of Engines. Adharma is that which checks the right movement of objects as opposed to Dharma in its function. Akasa or space is the fourth kind of substance which gives room or space to all other substances within it. Kala* or time is the fifth kind of substance

*That was, is, and shall be
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay
endure." —*Robert Browning, Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

Scientists may call this
doctrine of Potter and clay
the doctrine of the continuity of energy.

which causes change in things and creates present, past and future. These three tenses are relative names of change. It is an error of judgement to think that the conception of priority or posteriority about an identity alone has given rise to the idea of time. Kala* or time is a metaphysical reality in Jaina philosophy.

Thus Utpad, Dhrauvya Vyaya (formation, existence, change) are the Jaina Trinity, which pervades all the substances and attributes to this universe a permanent and eternal character. The death or destruction, growth and origin which are daily seen in this world, are nothing but modifications of the eternal substances. This universe thus made up of realities is itself real and permanent in nature and it is governed by its own inherent law of nature and not by any superhuman power.

*It is only called a substance for the matter of convenience; it is only figuratively a substance. Time is the duration of the states of substances; it is only by attribution a substance from the practical point of view. This definition is from the Vyarahara point of view. From the Nischaya, or real point of view, Kala is a substance which is the cause of time. It is of course indivisible—that is, it is not made up of pradeshas; but the Kevalgyani, the Arhant the Adept with complete perfect wisdom, actually realises time with its infinite atoms covering the whole infinity space, and bringing about all changes in space.

The Jivas Or animates, like the Ajivas, or inanimates or non-soul substances, also have no origin. They have been even in existence and shall exist for ever and are infinite in number. The Jivas or souls are of two kinds; Sidha the liberated souls; and the mundane, that is worldly souls which are bound by Karmas and are subject to transmigration from one form to the other according to the effect of Karmas on them. The Karmas are said to be of eight kinds and are obstacles to the attainment of self-realization. After observing the technical rules of conduct, the mundane soul can attain its divine nature and is no more subject to the cycle of births and rebirths—in other words, it becomes liberated. It is then that the soul realizes its inherent qualities, i e., infinite perception, infinite power, infinite happiness, etc. The liberated souls live in ~~Alokakasha~~ which is said to be at the extremity of the Lokasha or of the mundane world. But these two, Lokakasha and Alokakasha, together form the whole universe. These liberated souls are also in existence since ever; they are eternal and infinite in number. From eternity, the display of both the liberated and mundane souls is conti-

nuing and shall continue for good. The liberated souls in ~~8~~ Lokakasha from their existence point of view are infinite in number; but unitedly from their nature point of view they are all one and are all-pervading or Sarvavyapi. Let us make it clear from an example. In a big hall hundreds of electric bulbs are alit. To an on-looker from outside the gate, only a flood of light will be visible and not the hundreds of existing sources of light inside the hall. So there is one common quality or nature of all the liberated souls and their quality of light is all-pervading, but from the point of view of their existence there are a number of separate entities.

The mundane or the impure soul is like a lump of gold dug out from a gold mine. It is gold mixed with foreign matter. Just as there is a chemical process by which the foreign matter is separated from the gold particles and pure gold is extracted, the foreign Karmic matter is separated from the soul itself by practising technical rules of conduct, as prescribed in Jainism. Every action of a living being, whether by thought or speech or action, causes the influx known as Ashrava of Karmic matter, but

the Karmic matter is conjugated with the soul with the action performed. Thus firm conjugation is termed Bandhan. If the soul has done any action disinterestedly, i.e., without feeling the least pleasure or pain with action itself, the influx of the Karmic matter will no doubt be caused, but there will be no firm conjugation of **Bhandan** for the soul thereof. Thus by acting disinterestedly, the new conjugation of action is checked. There now remains the conjugation of the old Karmas to be wiped off in order to come to the pure stage. This is achieved by a process called *Nirjara*, which implies endurance of pain and suffering caused by the Karmas with patience and forbearance by the cultivation of *ahara* and vigorous control over the thought, speech and action, and by observing fasts and penances and by renouncing possessions. Thus the soul is made pure by the checking of the new Karmas and by casting off the Karmic bondage by the *Nirjara* process. The application of this knowledge in our daily life is primarily the chief religious practice in Jainism. This has evolved a very benevolent code of Jain ethics.

It goes without saying that all souls hanker after happiness in this world. Broadly speaking,

there are two conceptions of the standard of happiness here below. These two conceptions are in their turn based on two standards of spiritual development. There is one class of people who feel happiness in the achievement of worldly gains, and there is another type of people who hold that there is happiness in the development of the spiritual power and in selfrealization. The achievement of the worldly means of happiness is not in one's power. One may not achieve them in spite of one's hard work and toil to the utmost. And then, even after achieving the means one may not be completely happy; but in the latter case, spiritual achievement and happiness are guaranteed if the prescribed rules of conduct are observed. So it is that Goldsmith, in his novel *Vicar of Wakefield*, says : "It is possible to be completely miserable but it is not possible to be completely happy." On the former path one is dependent; while on the latter, one is quite independent. From the former's point of view, the world is man's home; while from the latter's point of view, the world is an inn, on way to home, Robert Browning's lines in *Pauline* imply the same thing when he says :

"I know this earth is not my sphere
For I cannot so narrow me, but that
I still exceed it"

John Masefield says :

"Laugh and be merry, like brothers akin.
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,"

Well has Campion sung :

"Good thoughts his only friend.
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
And quiet pilgrimage."

Religion alone is a constant and more forcible solace to man. It treats of man as a living entity thrown on this world for ennobling his mind and making himself fit for another abode which is his real Home.

Jainism is the strongest exponent of the apparent transitoriness and futility of the worldly possessions. It prescribes five essential vows for observation in daily life in the pursuit of the latter path :

1. Ahimsa-Non-injury to all human beings
2. Satya-Abstention from all lies;
3. Asteya-Abstention from stealing;
4. Brahmachariya-Leading the life of sexual abstinence.

5. Aparigraha—Non-possession of the material things. (This will make for speedy advent of socialism in the country.)

In Jainism, these five vows are prescribed for both monks and householders, with difference in degrees. A monk at the time of *diksha* should take a vow of complete renunciation, while a householder should take a vow of believing in the futility and transitoriness of the worldly things. He simplifies his wants by, and according to the circumstances of his life while aiming at the ideal of complete moderation, renunciation and abstention. The quality of the intention of a householder may be equal or even better than a monk's though he is conducting himself as per his partial vows. The householder thus adopts a long and round-about path of spiritual development, while a *Sadhu* ascends a steep, straight path. Jainism has also evolved a scale of measurement for spiritual progress at various stages which is known as *Gunasthan*. Thus according to Jain ethics, there remains very little occasion for the householders to fight or struggle unjustly after worldly things. For the monks, the cause of the struggle is altogether non-existent as they have entirely renounced

all kinds of possessions and taken a vow of complete non-possession from the very start of their monk life. Ahimsa, live-and-let-live, **Vishwa-Maitri** or friendliness with all beings, sacrifice of self-interest and service to others, justice and truth in everyday life, and right behaviour are not only said to be essential in Jainism for obtaining peace in the social life in this world but it has equally a technical significance for the attainment of a better life beyond or ultimate liberation.

In Jain ethics, right faith, right cognition and right conduct are the three fundamental and practical principles of life around which the whole Jaina spiritual philosophy revolves. The entire Jain community of monks is now founded in two sects **Digambara** and **Swetambara**. At one time monks of both these classes were under one common organization and they did really very useful missionary work jointly for the betterment of all beings. The Jains are generally charitable, sacrificing in spirit, and are great lovers of peace, justice and truth. This outlook and character found in the Jain community today is due to the effect of the Jaina ethics and belief in its spiritual

philosophy. If Jainism had kept its hold firmly in India and the Jaina community had kept its standards of character, we would have a more united and certainly a greater India than today, as Sri Shanmukham Chetty once said.

Now some explanation need also be given of the principle of the Jaina Ahimsa which has hitherto been misunderstood and misinterpreted by many persons. Even the academic world knew very little about the practical value of this virtuous principle before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi.

On the eve of Mahavir Jayanti, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in Harijan as follows: —

“No religion of the world has explained the principle of Ahimsa so deeply and scientifically as is discussed with its applicability to every day human life in Jainism. As and when the benevolent principle of Ahimsa or non-violence will be searched for practice by the people of the world to achieve their end of life in this world and beyond, Jainism is sure to have the uppermost status and Lord Mahavira is sure to be respected as the greatest authority on Ahimsa.”

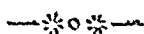
There are people who after the Christians think that if one is slapped on one of one's cheeks, one should turn one's other cheek also to the smiter in all humility. The other kind of people believe in paying tit-for-tat, or Row-

land for an Oliver. In clear words, it means that a brickbat should be replied with a stone or even a bullet. The beauty of Jainism lies in the fact that it has reconciled both the views in the framework of its philosophy and ethics. The interpretation of Ahimsa in Jainism is quite reasonable and applicable to everyday life in this world. Jainism has combined both these views and has prescribed the use of both the principles under, of course, different circumstances of life with the essential equilibrium of the non-violent intention even while doing an act of violence in emergent circumstances. Complete abstention from acts of violence is, no doubt, prescribed in Jainism, and so they must always conduct themselves after the former view—that is turning-the-other-cheek principle. But for the householders only **Sankalapa himsa** and **Bhava himsa** are forbidden, i. e., killing by intention and feeling. For a householder thus killing for sport or hunting is, no doubt, strictly forbidden. For the sake of defence or while one is disinterestedly discharging one's duty, if any aggressor is injured or killed one is not held guilty, the condition is that one should be a householder.

the principle of non-violence is applicable to everyday life. History tells us that there have been very strong and powerful Jaina rulers in India e g., Bimbisara, Chandragupta Maurya, Kharvela the Great, Kumara Pala and others whom historians have paid their glowing tributes for having established very powerful, just and benevolent administration in this country quite in keeping with the principle of non-violence as laid down for a householder. Turning to our own day, we can safely affirm that Mahatma Gandhi's practical life is an ideal of the practical working after the true conception of Jaina Ahimsa of which essential attributes are Vishwa Maitri, love and justice to all human beings. It was for these very reasons that he was regarded as an ideal saint. His dynamic spiritual love for the entire humanity and his spirit of self-less service, accommodation and adjustment after his strong belief and immovable faith in the principle of Ahimsa, made him what he was—Great. In great measure, his life itself holds a mirror to the interpretation of the principle of Ahimsa. The applicability of Ahimsa to life can be understood from the explanation given in the

Jaina literature. One should keep the line of demarcation quite clear in one's mind—I mean, between the two aspects of life, Nischaya and Vyavahara.

From the above outline of the fundamental principles of Jaina ethics and philosophy, it will be readily seen that Jainism has furnished the groundwork for our Constitution, so that we can say, without fear of contradiction, that the skeleton is of law, but the soul is of Jainism.



VI

The Influence of Jainism on Modern Civilization.

Some people seem to possess what may be described as an unholy dread of religion on the ground that it would be destructive of civilization. This fear is however, founded on a false notion and probably is begotten of the misunderstanding and confusion in the minds of those persons who have no idea of the great ideal of the soul, and whose conception of being does not embrace the life beyond the grave. The *raison d'être* for this fear is that they confound civilization with sensualism, whether refined or gross. The true significance of civilization means nothing if not the culture of the soul on lines which are compatible with its steady progress, both here and in the life or lives after death. Sensualism, however much it might be refined, is only calculated to destroy the finer instincts of the soul, making it negative and consequently foredooming it to the

torments of hell and future undesirable incarnations, as brutes and beasts. The ancients were by no means deficient in knowledge of things and sciences which have contributed towards the building up of what we boast of as our modern civilization, but they also knew that the things which appeal to the senses only lead to the degeneration of the soul, and wisely refrained from cultivating beyond certain useful limits the arts and sciences which lead to fatten the body at the cost of the spiritual nourishment of the soul.

The one most marked feature of distinction between man and animal is the thinking and reasoning capacity which the former is endowed with, and may develop to perfection, and from which the latter is largely debarred : hence while an animal has little or no chance of bettering its condition in its present form, man may and ought to avail himself of the opportunity if he would avoid pain and suffering here and hereafter. The civilization, which enables him to do so speedily is the only form of culture of which reason can approve, not the civilization which invites him to the fold of sensualism. The one most prominent feature

of the modern time is the cost of living, which is going up from day to day and which entails the devotion of whole-time labours to the procuring of the means of livelihood and those other things which are necessary to enable one to be counted as a "somebody" in society. This leaves no time for spiritual unfoldment, which itself demands the withdrawal of the outgoing energy and its inner concentration for the destruction of the Karmic bonds. It was on this very ground that Mahatma Gandhi, who was essentially a Jain, held the view that the progress in civilization lies in the reduction of man's material wants to a minimum. Jainism which propounds self-abnegation, *tiyag*, is the only system of philosophical thought that can deliver the goods

The civilization of the ancients, on the contrary, never lost sight of the necessity for the spiritual evolution of the soul, and then the cost of living was so cheap that every one could procure the necessities of life without much trouble or labour, utilizing every moment of one's valuable time for devotion to God, i. e., the ideal of perfection and Bliss. There can be no gainsaying the fact that the effect or influ-

ence of Jainism on modern civilization does not mean the destruction of its useful institutions at all, but only the elimination of such of them as actually play havoc with the spiritual aspirations of the soul and lead it to undesirable regions and unhappy incarnations in the future.

Conclusion

To bring to a focus the subject of Jainism which is essentially inconfusable, let me recapitulate what I have said in the preceding chapters that its philosophy is rational and scientific and not dogmatic, and that the development of life is dependent on self-effort and not on the mercy of any super-human power. The end or goal of life according to Jainism is beyond this material world which is just like an inn on way to man's real Home. The main precaution in our travel through the world is to travel as light as possible with as few of material limitations as can be hoped for in order to reach our Home - the abode of eternal peace and happiness. That is why we have in the Jaina community a number of gymnosophists

who are living symbols of the fact that man comes into the world without clothings or material possessions and so must he quit this world. This kind of outlook about the world and life of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, abstinence and non-possession naturally leaves little room for greed and selfishness and hate which are the basis of all troubles and struggles and strifes in the world.

Mrs. Margaret Stevenson should learn that the upward path does not lie in criticising this religion or that but in tolerating all faiths and venerating them in the same way as we do our own. The equal treatment of all religions imposes an obligation on the members of the different religions to practise mutual tolerance. Intolerance is a proof of incomprehension. Let me end by quoting :

"There be many castes and many creeds,
And many roads that wind and wind,
But just the art of being kind,
Is all that this world needs".

— ❀ —

Victory to Jainism and Peace to All.

THE END